



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/727,134	11/30/2000	Norbert Wolters	8874-US	2924
30689	7590	02/24/2006	EXAMINER	
DEERE & COMPANY ONE JOHN DEERE PLACE MOLINE, IL 61265				KOVACS, ARPAD F
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3671	

DATE MAILED: 02/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/727,134	WOLTERS ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Árpád Fábián Kovács	3671

– The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address –

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 February 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-13, 15 and 17-21 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) 8-13, 15, 17-19 is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-7, 20 and 21 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 5 recites the limitation "the device" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. It is unclear if the "feeding device" or the "picking device" is being referred to.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-7, 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wiegert (PCT WO 99/03323), in view of Thompson (2777267) and Pottinger et al (GB 2012154, cited by the applicant).

Wiegert discloses:

In re independent claims 1, 2, 20:

a feeding and picking device for feeding and picking a standing crop's individual plant stalks, the device comprising:
a rotating feeding element rotated about a vertical axis in a circle comprising a body with outwardly extending fingers (fig 4, ref 20);
a picking/gathering device (figs 4, 6, refs 10, 11) which separate useable parts from stalks;
an inlet is located in front of the vertical axis (see fig 4);

claim 3:

a snapping channel/gathering gap (31) wherein the feeding device covers the snapping channel (as shown on fig 4, the feeding device covers the channel);

Wiegert discloses the claimed invention above including the fact the feeding element can be substituted by any other known devices (Applicant can refer to a translated copy, see Appeal Brief, or to an equivalent US Patent 6412259, column 2, lines 32-33), however Wiegert does not show or list the claimed alternative feeding device which grasps plant stalks as claimed.

Both Pottinger and Thompson disclose known devices for conveying the stalk, for example Thompson shows that the feeding device with finger (fig 1-2, ref 31), wherein the fingers of the upper element (for example ref 37) are directed away from a direction of rotation (as shown on fig 1) and the lower feeding element is beneath the upper feeding element and rotate the same direction as the upper one (fig 2, 3); and similarly Pottinger shows on fig 2 and 4, the same arrangement wherein the upper feeding element (bent tines ref. 10 or feeding element(s) are shown, also see page 3, ln 114-115) are directed away from the direction of the feeding element; and the lower feeding element is beneath the upper feeding element and rotate the same direction as the upper one (fig 1).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the feeding device of Wiegert with the alternative feeding device taught by either Pottinger and/or Thompson, in order to improve the lifting actions and support on stalks which may have been leaned forwardly by the agricultural harvester.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 8-13, 15, 17-19 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 1/6/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

As shown above, the inlet located in front of the vertical axis of the feeding device, as now the claims are amended, also met by the combination of the references.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Árpád Fábián Kovács whose telephone number is 571 272 6990. The examiner can normally be reached on Mo-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas B. Will can be reached on 571 272 6998. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AFK *A Kovács*
Árpád Fábián Kovács
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3671

ÁFK